



No. 259 Rs. 3.00

# THE **MIRACULOUS CONCH**

## AND A GAME OF CHESS





There are many who love to tell a story and many more who love to listen to one. And each time a story is retold, it acquires a new colour and a fresh dimension.

The grandmother who heard a story as a little girl from her grandmother, tells the same story to her grandchild but with a few embellishments of her own. The traveller from a distant land who happens to hear a story in the course of his travels, later tells it to his own people, modifying it to make it more dramatic or more acceptable to his audience. That is how stories which had first been told centuries ago have been kept alive and why we find recurring themes in the tales told in different regions separated by hundreds of miles.

This Amar Chitra Katha retells two stories from John Dorairaj's 'Miraculous Conch', a collection of folktales published in the Echo series of India Book House Publishing Company, Bombay.

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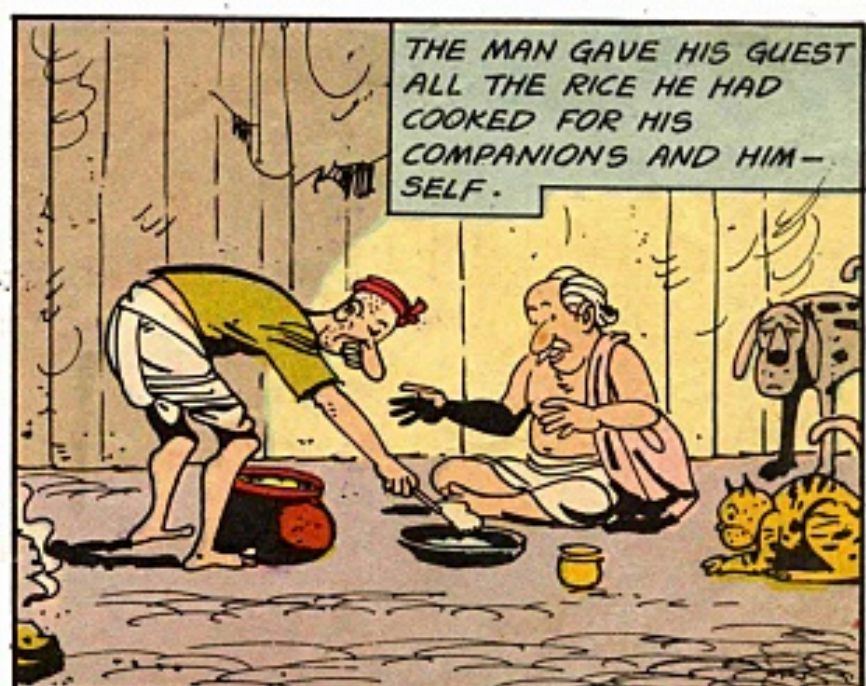
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# THE MIRACULOUS CONCH

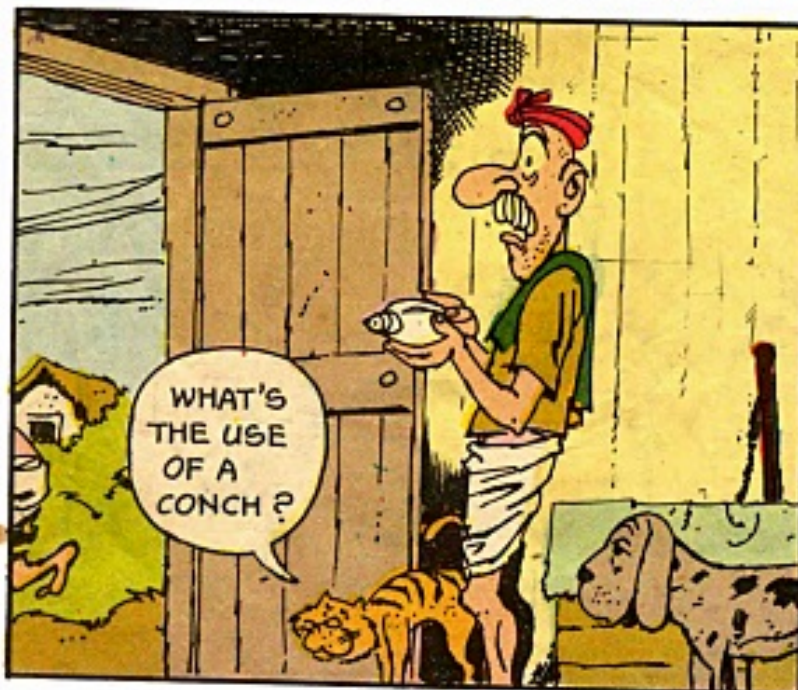




THE GUEST ATE UP EVERY GRAIN OF IT.



EARLY NEXT MORNING —





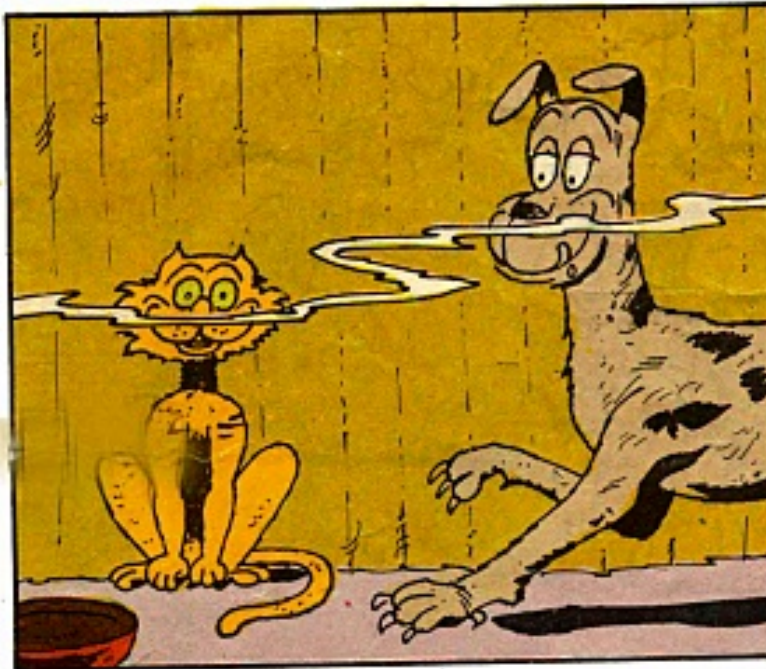
THAT AFTERNOON AS THE OLD MAN WAS COOKING A HANDFUL OF RICE WHICH HE HAD BORROWED FROM A NEIGHBOUR —

I'LL DROP THE CONCH IN AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS. IT MAY IMPROVE THE TASTE.



THE MOMENT HE DROPPED THE CONCH INTO THE POT...

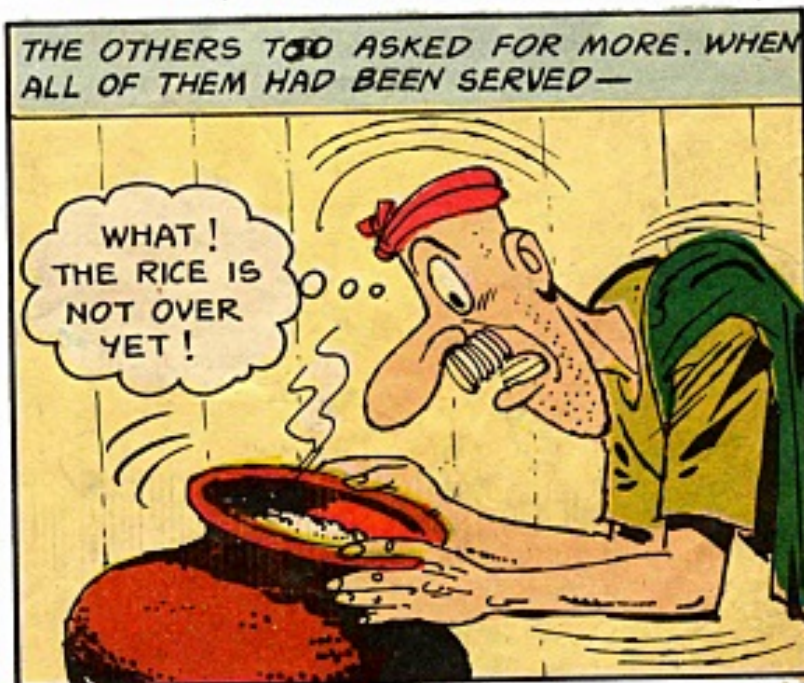
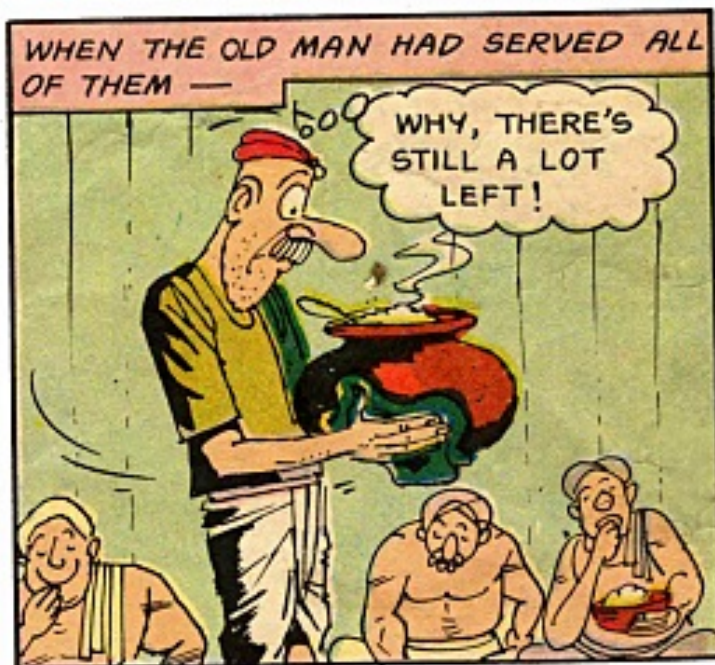
...A DELICIOUS AROMA ROSE UP FROM IT.













IN FACT THE QUANTITY DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE DECREASED AT ALL.



IT COULD ONLY BE DUE TO THE CONCH. IT MUST BE A MAGICAL ONE.



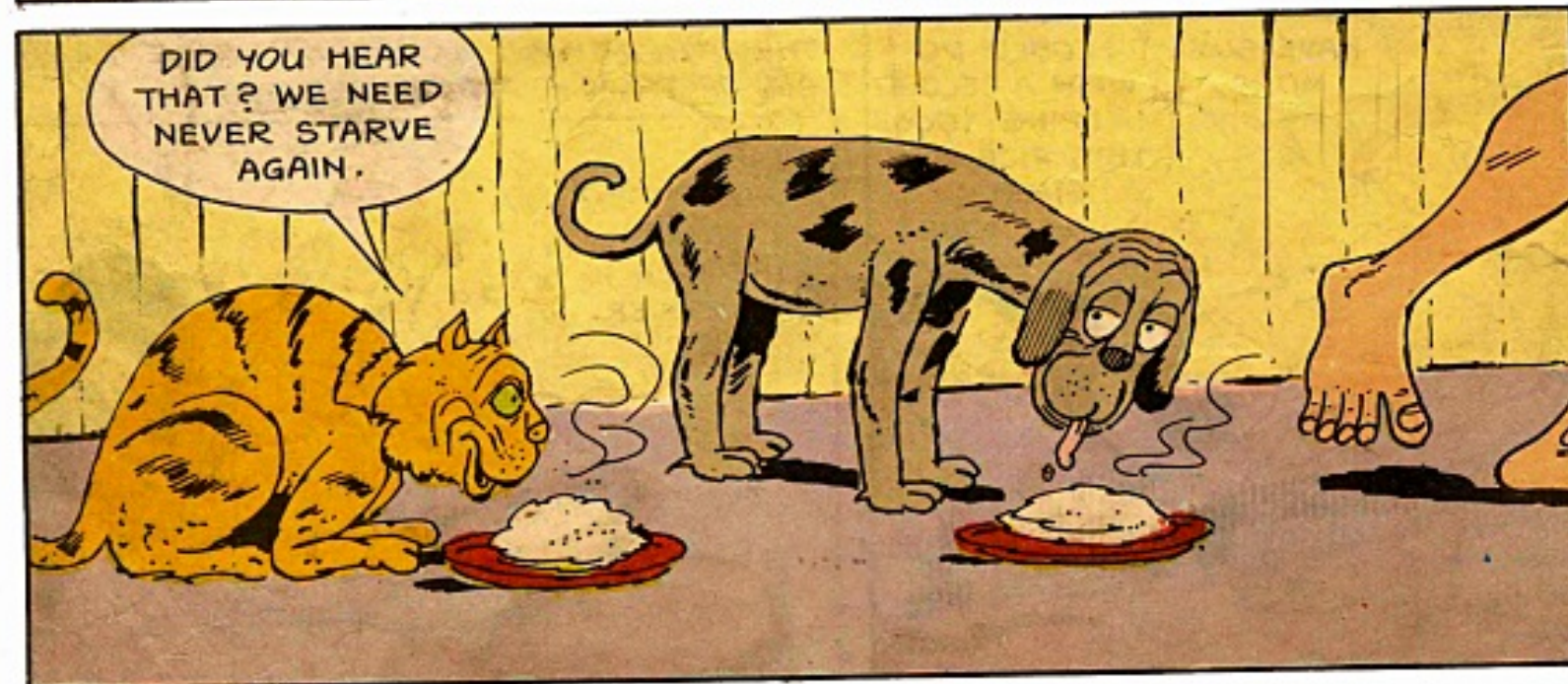
HERE, MY FRIENDS. I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING FOR SO LONG.



EAT AS MUCH AS YOU WANT. THERE WILL BE ENOUGH RICE AS LONG AS THE CONCH IS IN THE POT.



DID YOU HEAR THAT? WE NEED NEVER STARVE AGAIN.

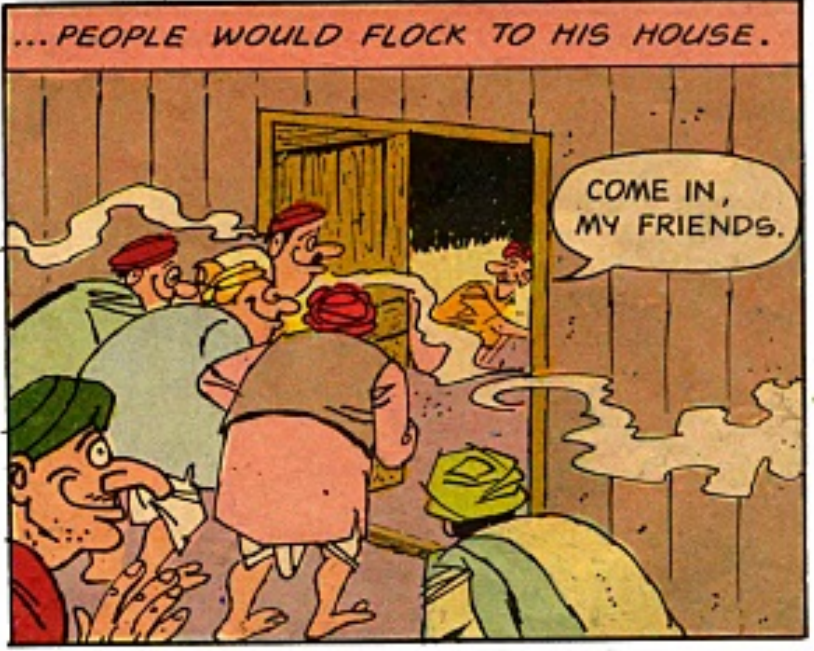




EVERY TIME THE OLD MAN  
COOKED RICE..



...PEOPLE WOULD FLOCK TO HIS HOUSE.



SOON THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE COMING  
EVERY DAY THAT HE BEGAN TO CHARGE A  
SMALL PRICE FOR THE RICE.



THE CAT AND THE DOG TOO  
BECAME FAT WITH THE GOOD  
FOOD THEY ATE.

THIS IS THE SORT  
OF LIFE I LOVE.  
PLENTY TO EAT...



...AND NO  
WORK TO DO.



DAYS AND WEEKS PASSED. ONE MORNING HIS  
FIRST CUSTOMERS WERE SOME TRAVELLERS.





THEY BOUGHT A LOT OF RICE FROM HIM AND TOOK IT AWAY WITH THEM.



SOME TIME LATER AS THE OLD MAN WAS SERVING HIS OTHER CUSTOMERS —

ARE MY EYES DECEIVING ME? THE RICE SEEMS TO BE DIMINISHING.



WHEN HE HAD TAKEN OUT A FEW MORE LADLES —

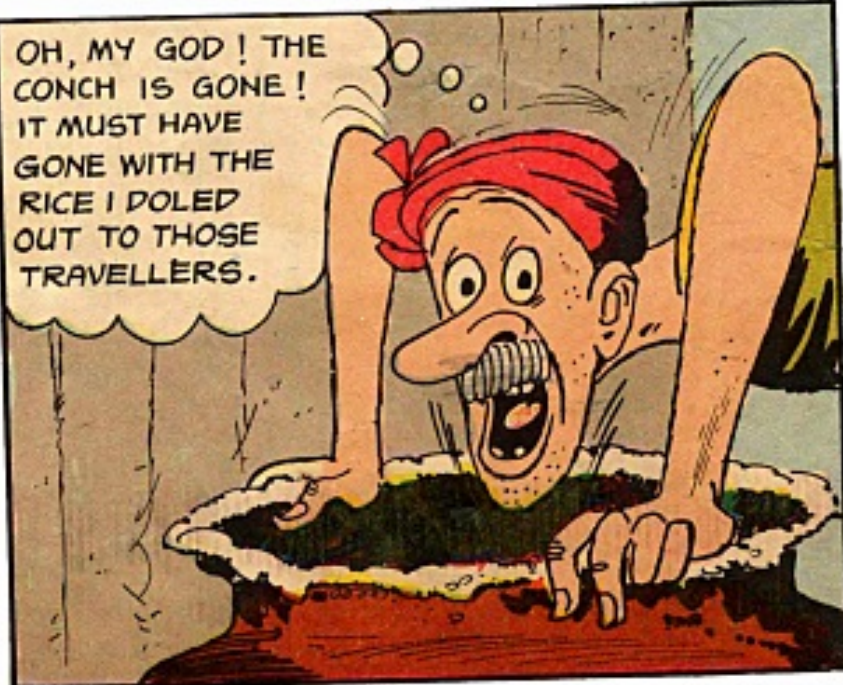
THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT IT NOW. THE QUANTITY HAS GREATLY DECREASED.



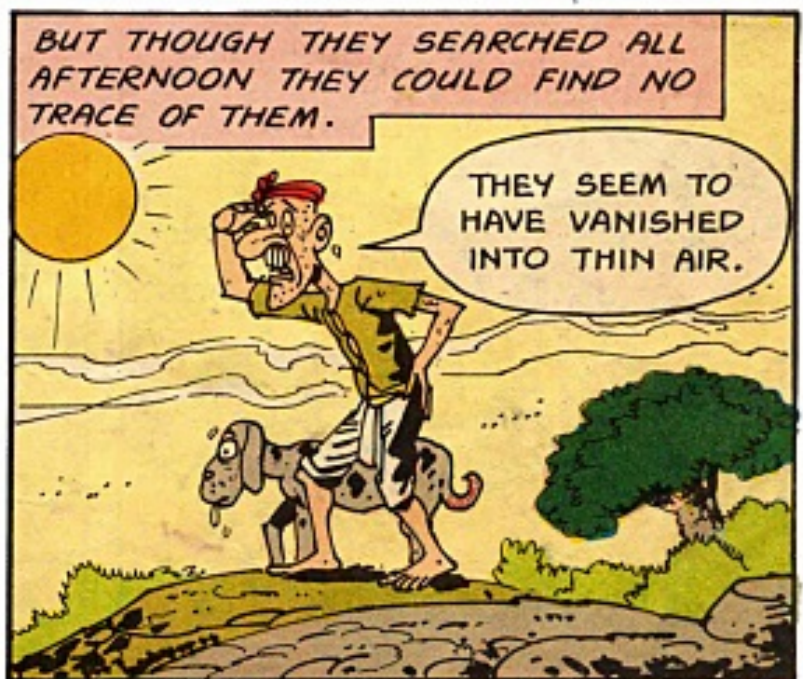
THE CONCH! WHERE IS THE CONCH?



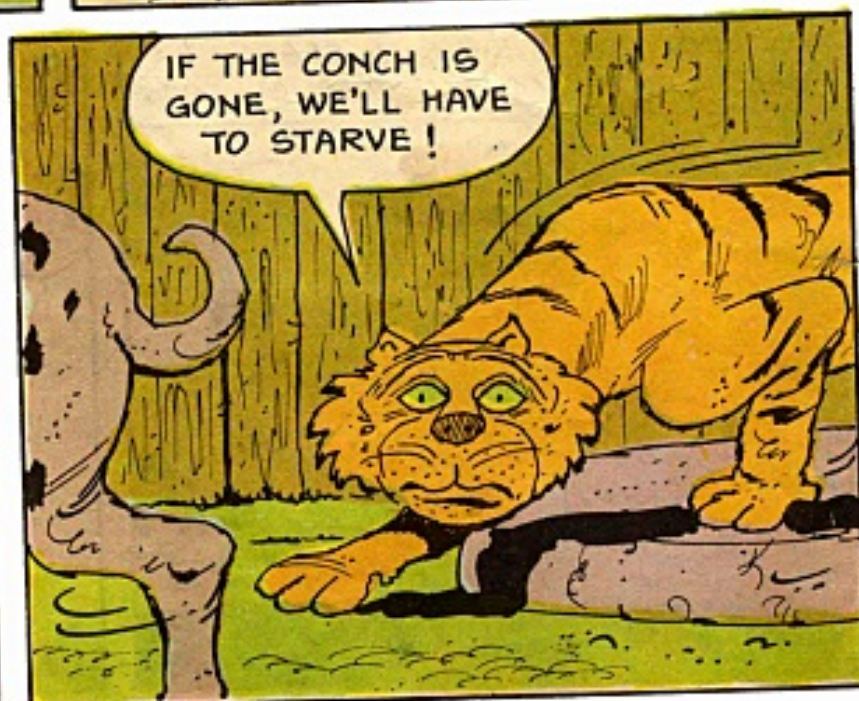
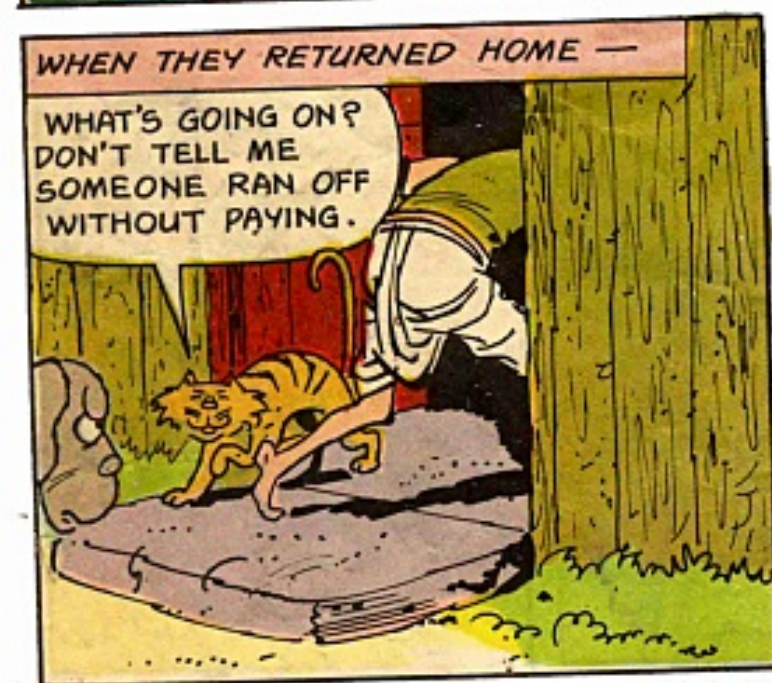
OH, MY GOD! THE CONCH IS GONE! IT MUST HAVE GONE WITH THE RICE I DOLED OUT TO THOSE TRAVELLERS.













THE VILLAGERS WONDERED WHY THE OLD MAN HAD STOPPED COOKING HIS DELECTABLE RICE. SOME OF THEM WHO WENT TO ENQUIRE CAME BACK WITH PUZZLED LOOKS ON THEIR FACES.



HE GOT ON FAIRLY WELL IN THE BEGINNING. HE HAD MONEY AND HE COULD BUY THE FOOD HE WANTED.



BUT IN COURSE OF TIME HIS MONEY BEGAN TO RUN OUT.



WE'LL GET LESS TOMORROW. JUST WATCH.



IT'S TIME WE DID SOMETHING TO HELP OUR MASTER.

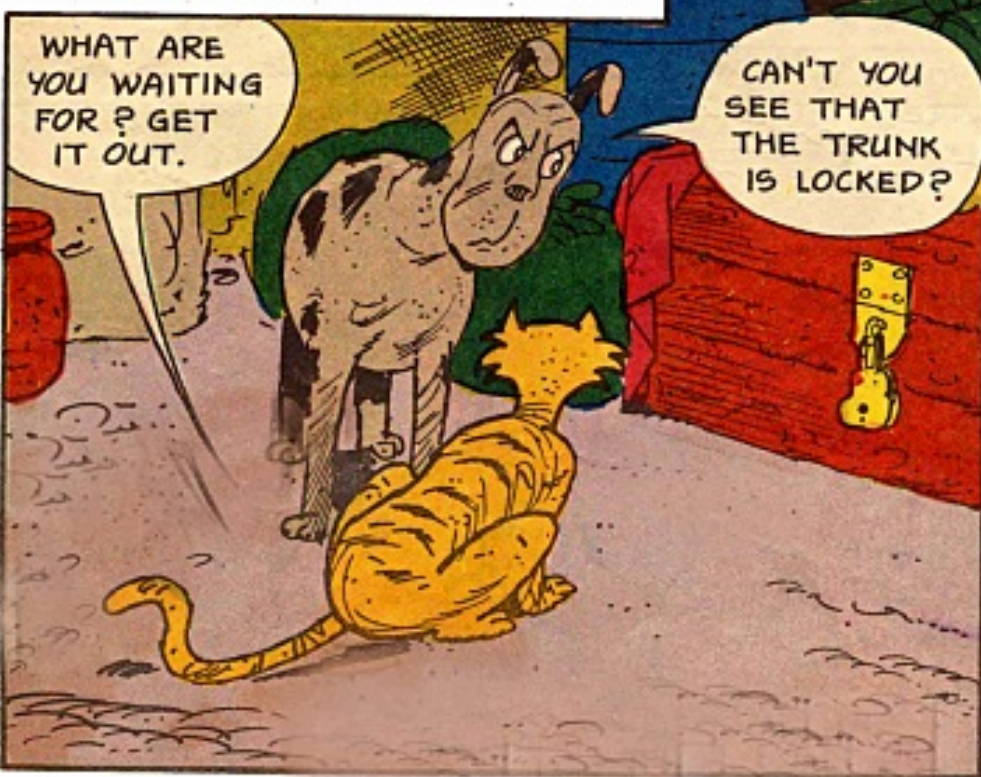




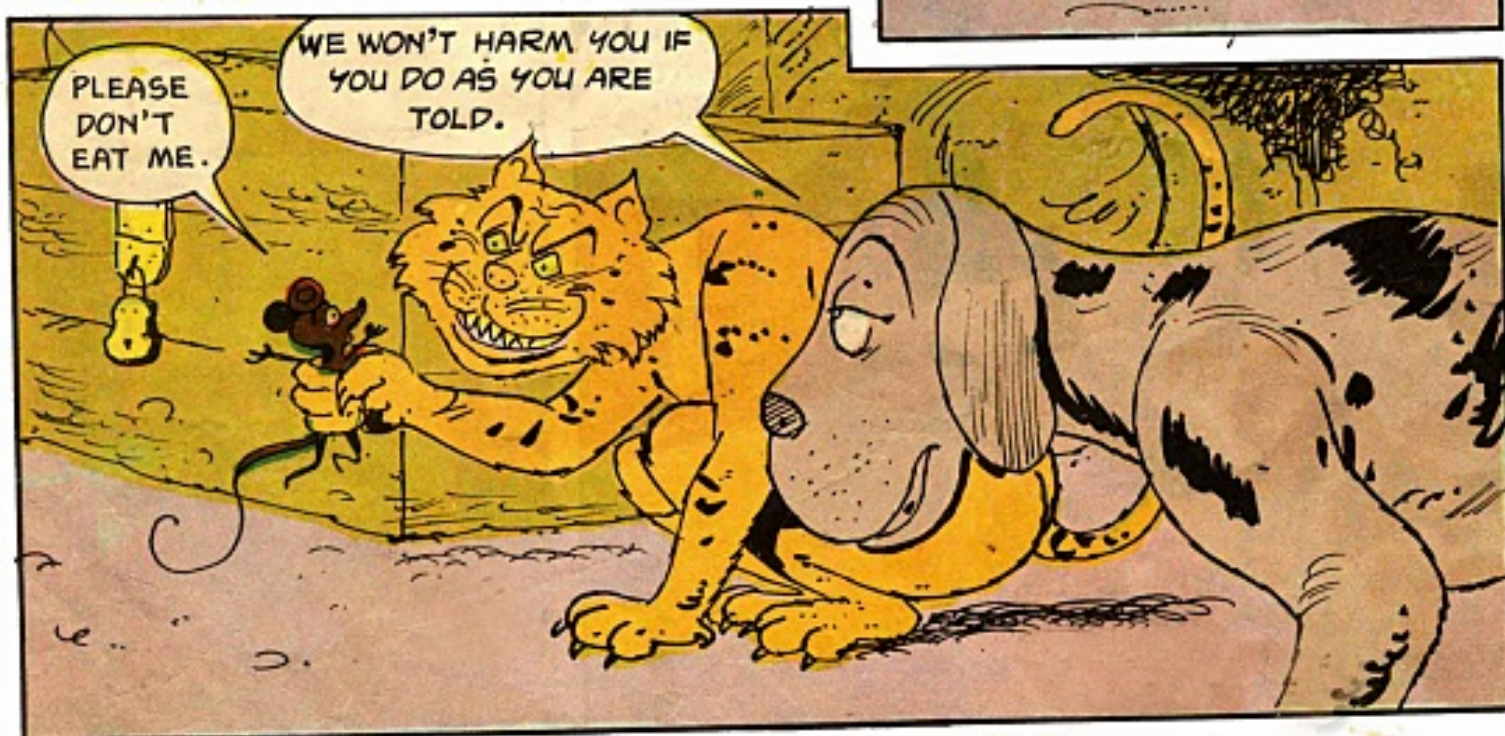
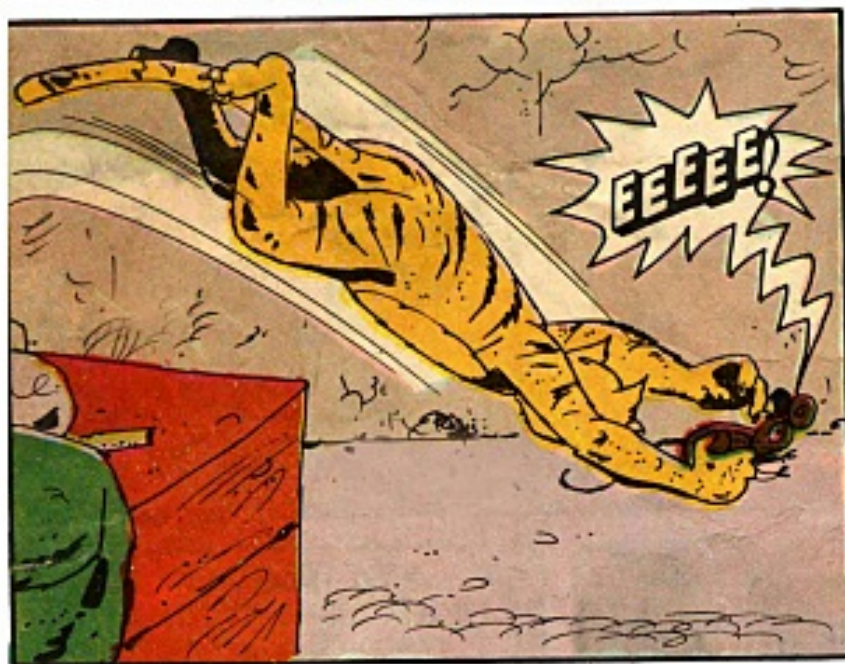




AS THE CAT AND THE DOG WENT ROUND —









THERE'S A CONCH  
IN THAT TRUNK. WE  
WANT YOU TO TAKE  
IT OUT FOR US.

THAT SHOULD  
NOT BE  
DIFFICULT.

THEN GET TO WORK.  
WE WILL SET YOU  
FREE AS SOON AS  
YOU FINISH.

THE RAT BEGAN TO  
GNAW AT THE TRUNK.



AFTER SOME TIME —

LET GO OF MY  
TAIL. I CAN GO  
IN NOW.



SUDDENLY —  
SOMEONE'S  
COMING.



WHAT'S  
THAT RAT  
DOING?

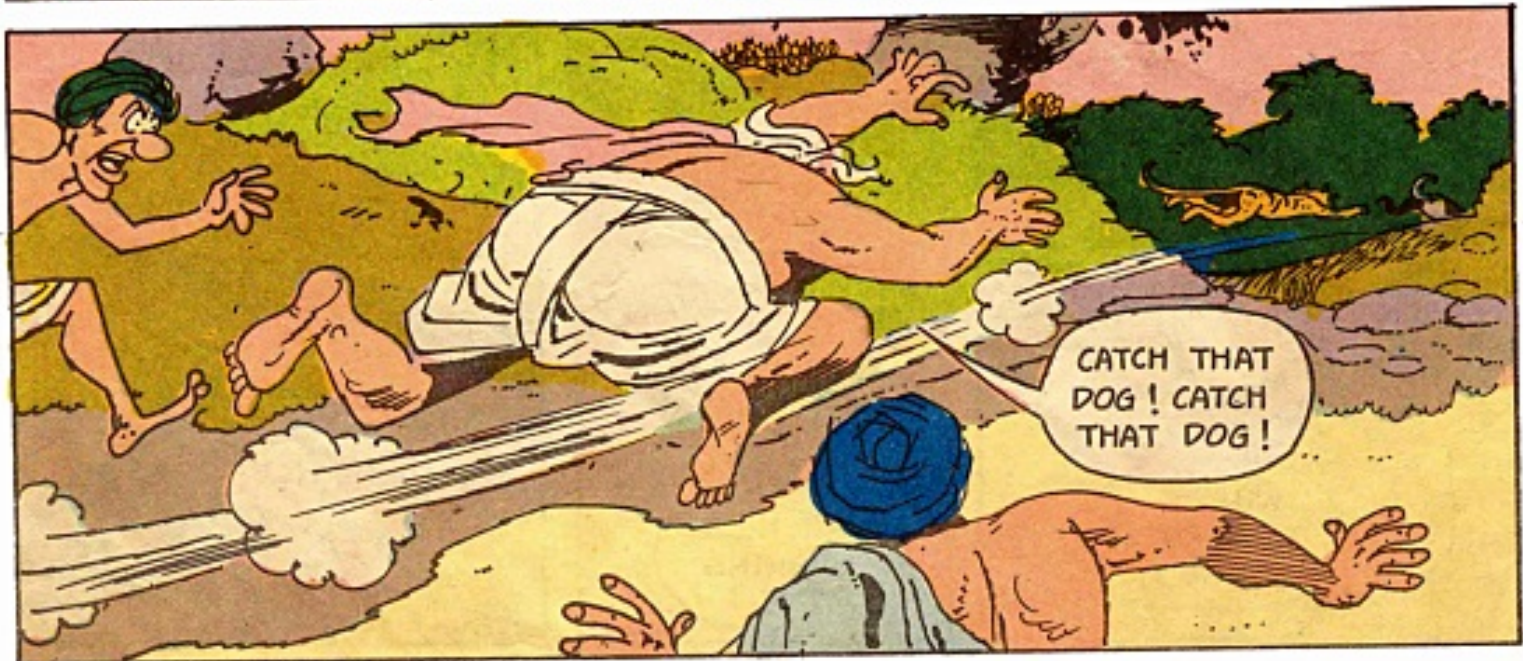
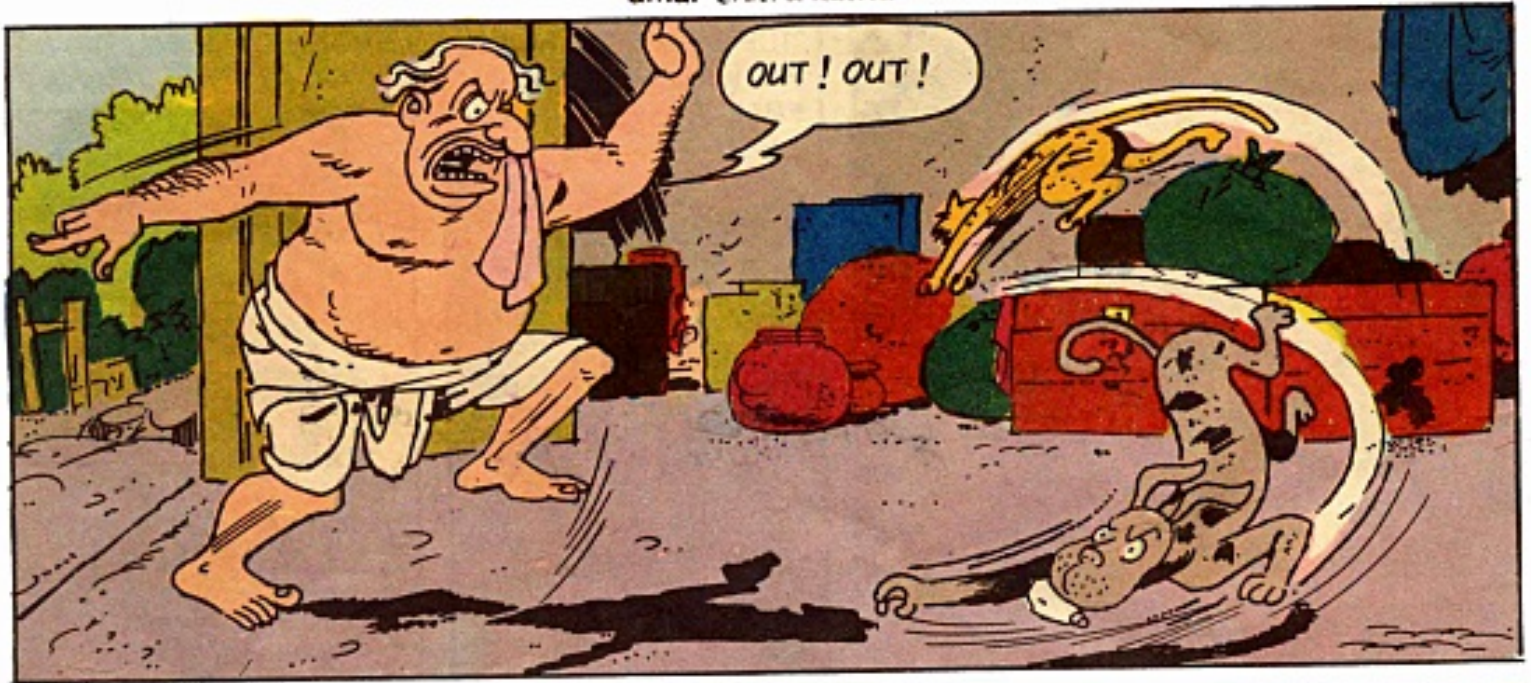


AH, HE'S  
PUSHING  
IT OUT.



WHAT'S  
GOING ON  
HERE?

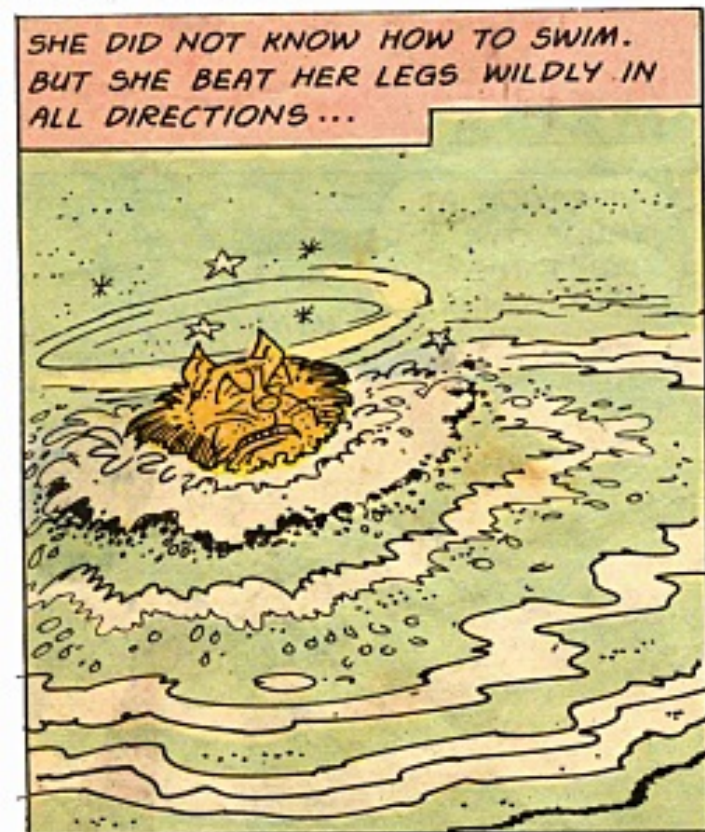
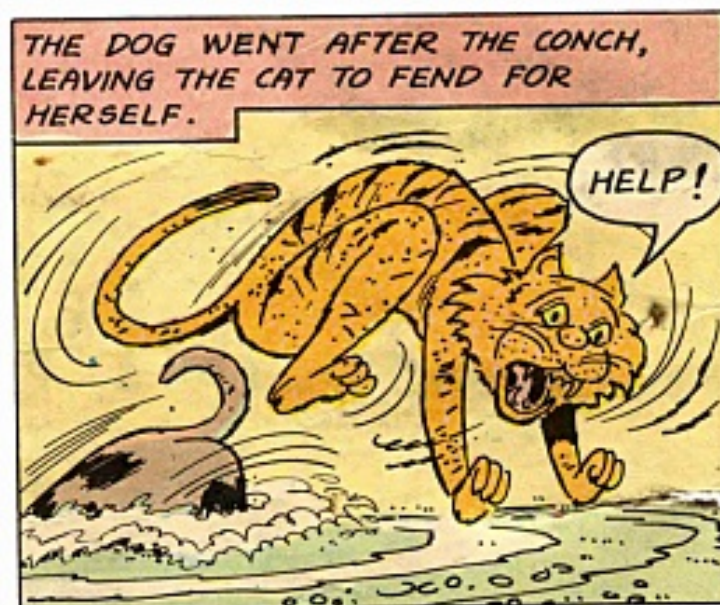
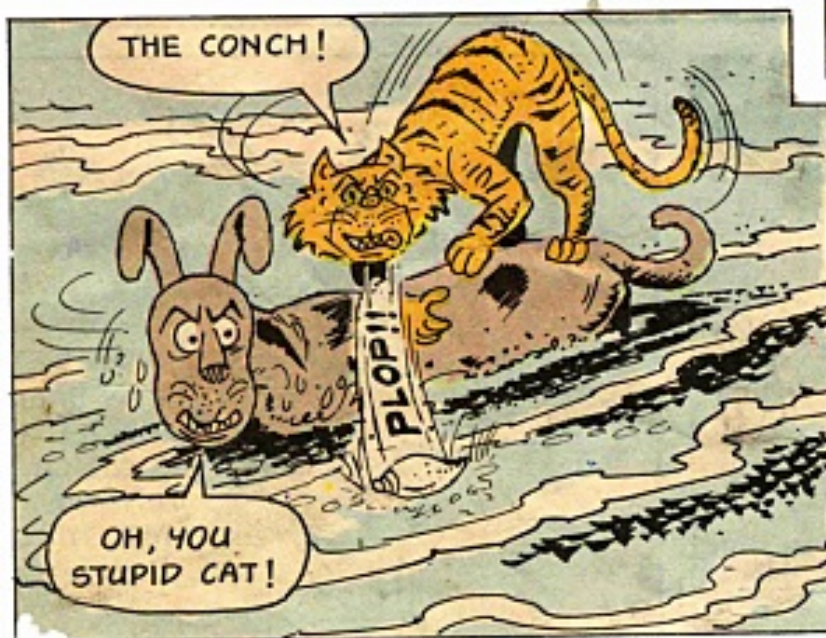














NOW I DARE NOT  
GO HOME. HE'LL  
BLAME ME FOR THE  
LOSS OF THE  
CONCH.

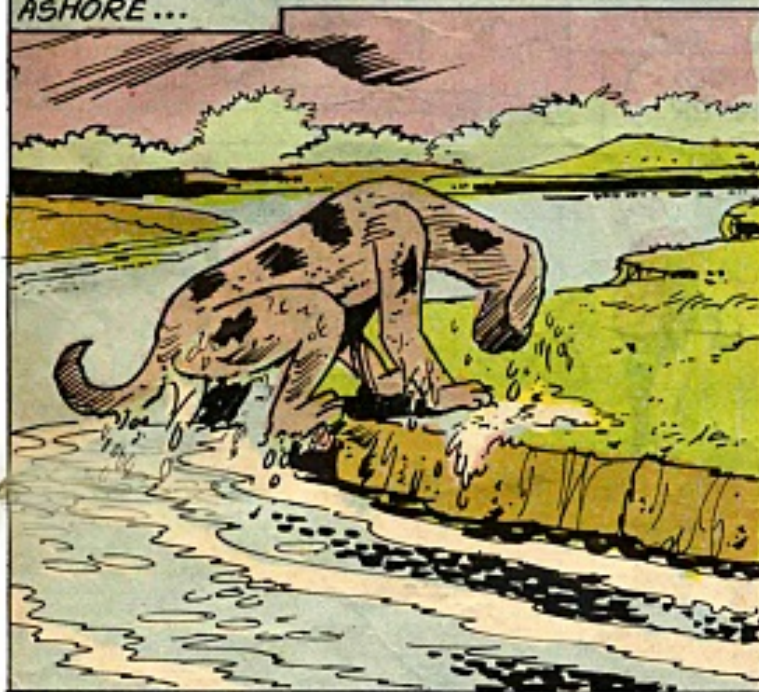


THE CAT CLIMBED A TREE AND HID  
HERSELF IN A HOLLOW.

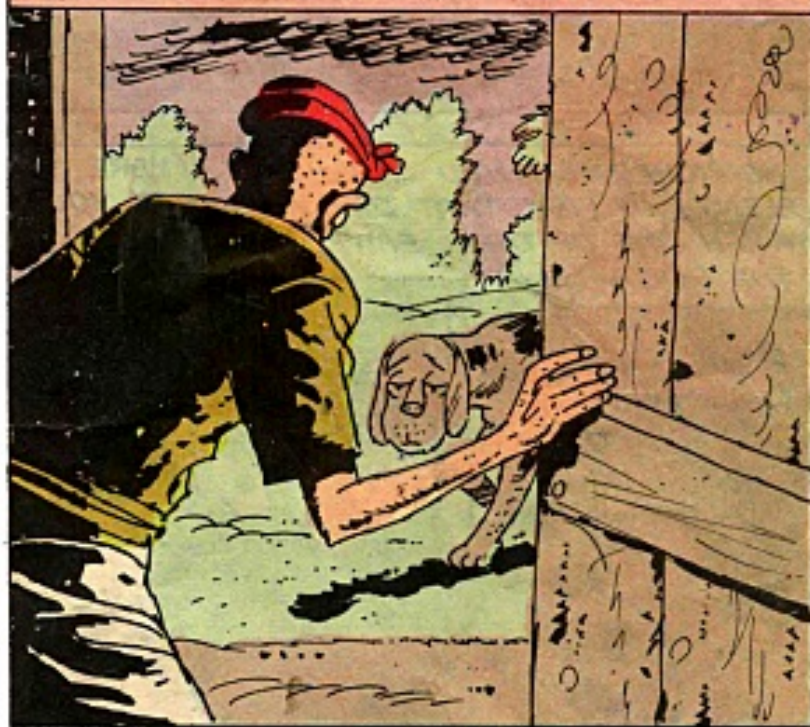


I'LL STAY HERE FOR  
A FEW DAYS TILL HIS  
ANGER DIES DOWN.

MEANWHILE THE DOG HAD NOT BEEN  
ABLE TO RETRIEVE THE CONCH. HE SWAM  
ASHORE...

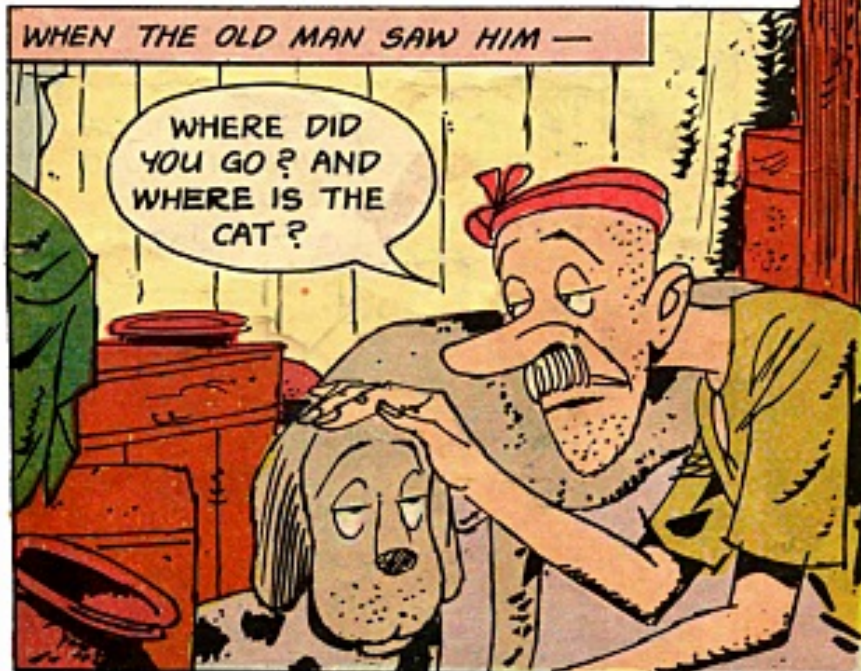


...AND RETURNED TO HIS MASTER.



WHEN THE OLD MAN SAW HIM —

WHERE DID  
YOU GO? AND  
WHERE IS THE  
CAT?



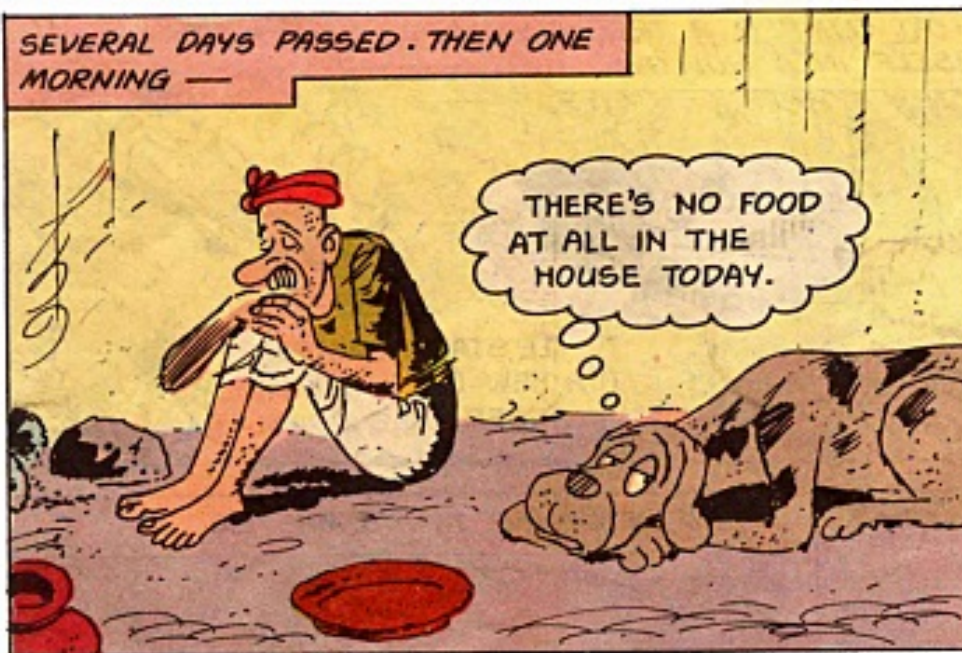
HAS SHE FOUND  
ANOTHER MASTER?  
OH, WELL! PERHAPS  
SHE HAS DONE  
THE RIGHT THING.



THE OLD MAN AND  
THE DOG SETTLED  
DOWN TO THEIR OLD  
LIFE.

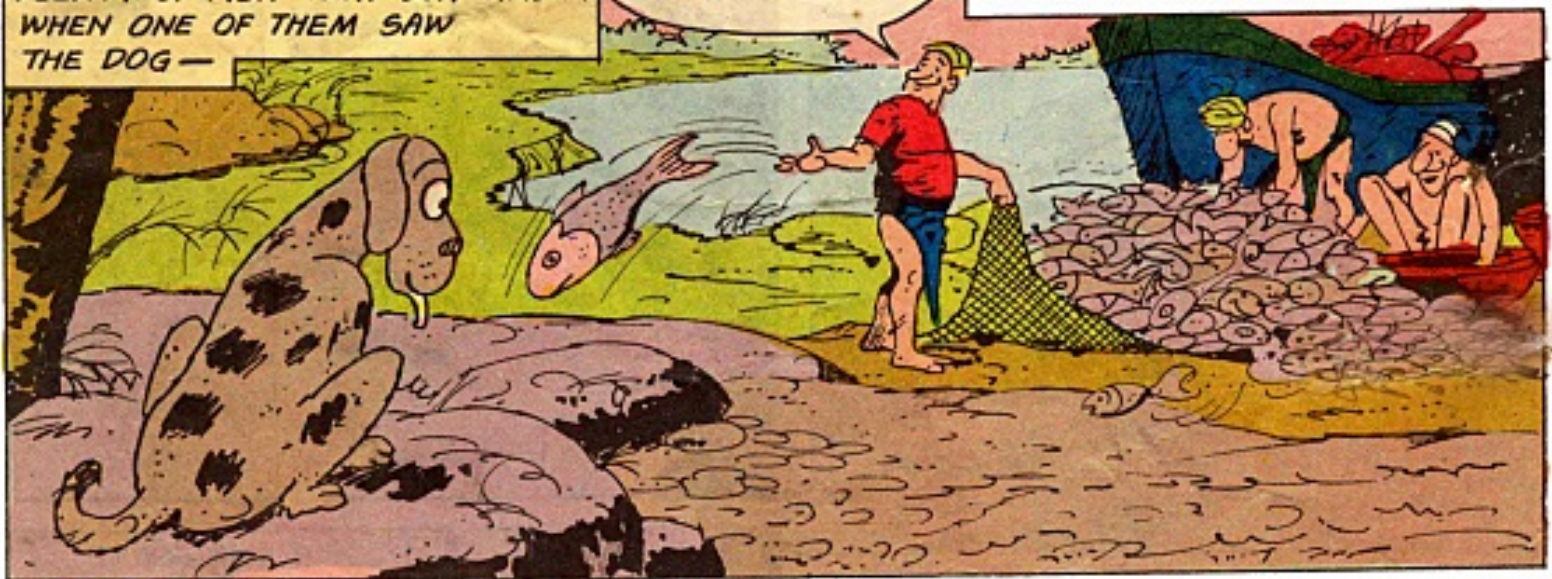


SEVERAL DAYS PASSED. THEN ONE MORNING —



THE FISHERMEN HAD CAUGHT PLENTY OF FISH THAT DAY AND WHEN ONE OF THEM SAW THE DOG —

HERE, TAKE THIS TO YOUR MASTER.



THE OLD MAN WAS INDEED DELIGHTED.





NOW LET'S CLEAN  
AND COOK THIS  
MAGNIFICENT FISH.

THE MAN CLEANED THE FISH.

WHEN HE CUT IT OPEN —

A CONCH!

I...I THINK  
IT'S THE SAME  
CONCH WHICH  
WE LOST.

WE HAVE GOT  
OUR CONCH  
BACK.

THE  
NEXT  
DAY —

IS MY NOSE  
DECEIVING ME  
OR...

IT ISN'T...  
I CAN SMELL  
IT TOO!







## A GAME OF CHESS



ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A KING. HE WAS A DESPOT AND HE HAD A STRANGE METHOD OF ACQUIRING SLAVES.

ANYBODY WHO NEEDED HIS HELP HAD TO PLAY A GAME OF CHESS WITH HIM.



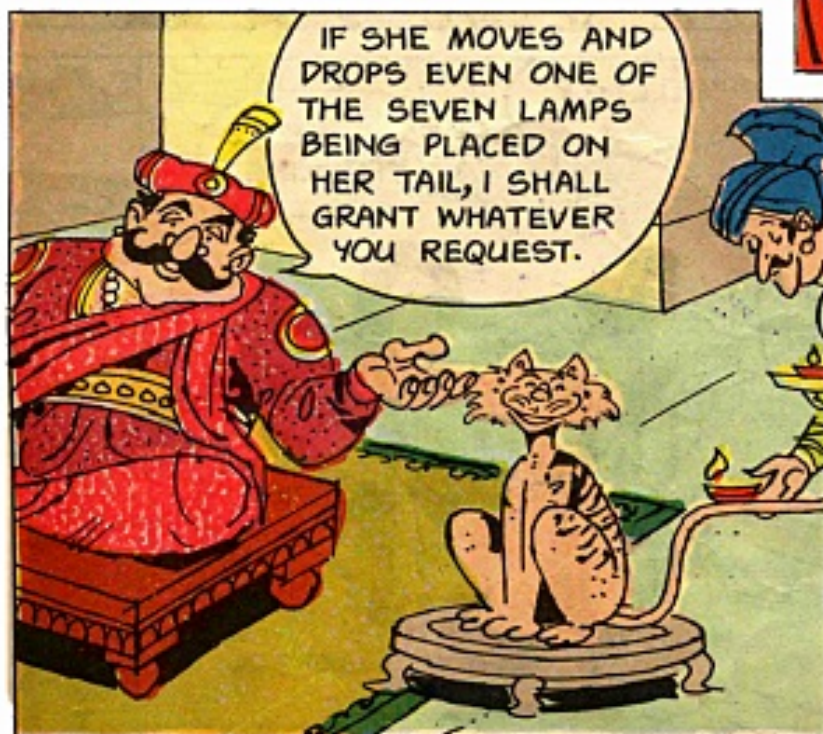
I AM NOT VERY GOOD AT THIS GAME, YOUR MAJESTY.

THAT DOESN'T MATTER.



IT'S NOT YOUR SKILL, BUT THIS CAT'S THAT WILL DECIDE THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME.

CAT?



IF SHE MOVES AND DROPS EVEN ONE OF THE SEVEN LAMPS BEING PLACED ON HER TAIL, I SHALL GRANT WHATEVER YOU REQUEST.



BUT IF SHE SHOULD SIT WITHOUT MOVING TILL THE END OF THE GAME, YOU SHALL BECOME MY SLAVE.





UNFORTUNATELY FOR ANYONE WHO PLAYED AGAINST THE KING, THE CAT WAS WELL TRAINED. SO THE KING NEVER LOST.



I HAVE COME TO ASK PERMISSION TO TRADE IN THIS CITY.



OH, YES! I AM VERY GOOD AT IT, IN FACT. BUT WHY DO YOU ASK?



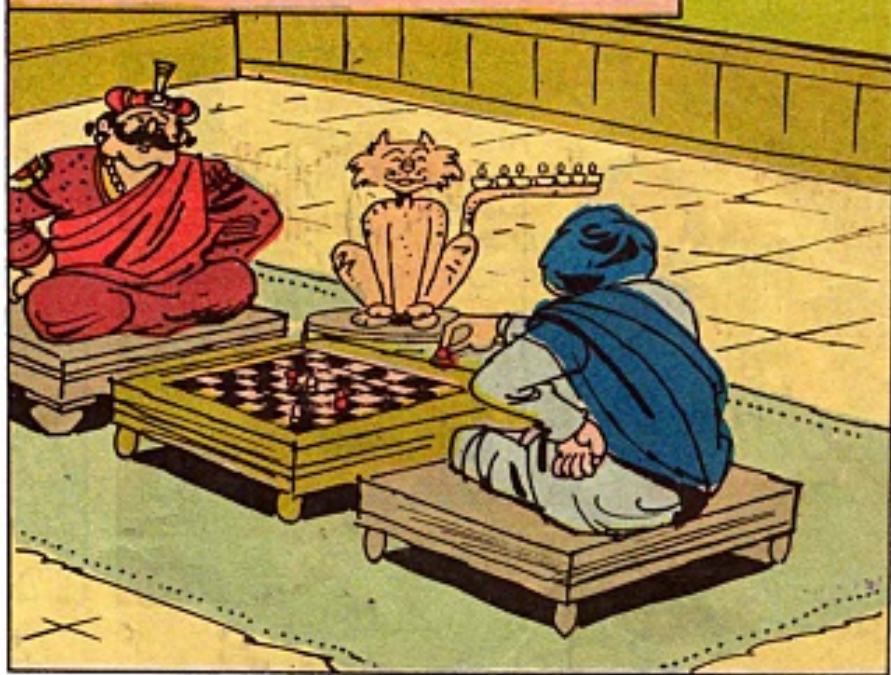




HE DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PROLONG THE GAME.



SOME TIME LATER, THE MERCHANT SAT DOWN TO PLAY WITH THE KING.



IT WENT ON AND ON.



BUT FINALLY, TO HIS HORROR —



I'LL HAVE TO SEND A MESSAGE TO MY WIFE EXPLAINING MY FLIGHT.





THE MERCHANT'S WIFE WAS A BRAVE AND CLEVER WOMAN. WHEN SHE GOT THE NEWS OF HER HUSBAND'S MISFORTUNE —



DRESSING HERSELF UP AS A MAN, THE WOMAN WENT TO THE PALACE WITH ONE OF HER SERVANTS.









THE GAME BEGAN. THE KING PLAYED CONFIDENTLY.

THIS MAN TOO WILL SOON BE MY SLAVE.



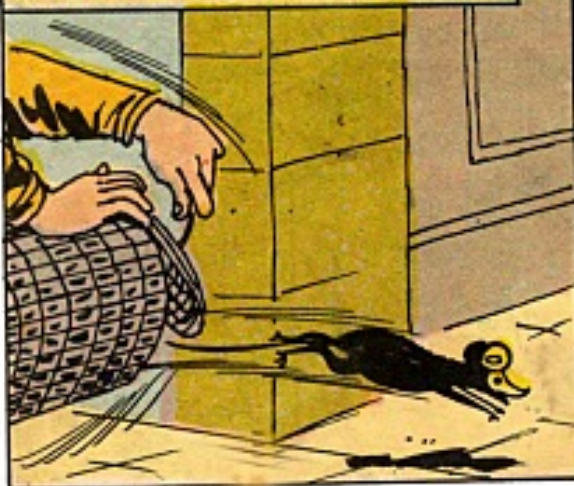
AFTER SOME TIME, THE SERVANT WHO WAS STANDING OUTSIDE...



ON SEEING THE MOUSE, THE CAT STIFFENED AND PRICKED UP HER EARS.



... RELEASED A MOUSE INTO THE PLAYING ROOM.



BUT THE KING GLARED FIERCELY AT HER AND SHE MADE HERSELF IMMOBILE AGAIN.



A LITTLE LATER, THE SERVANT LET OUT ANOTHER MOUSE.





AGAIN THE CAT MOVED  
RESTLESSLY ...



...AND ALMOST DROPPED A LAMP.



I'D BETTER END THE  
GAME FAST. SOMETHING  
IS WRONG WITH  
THAT CAT TODAY.

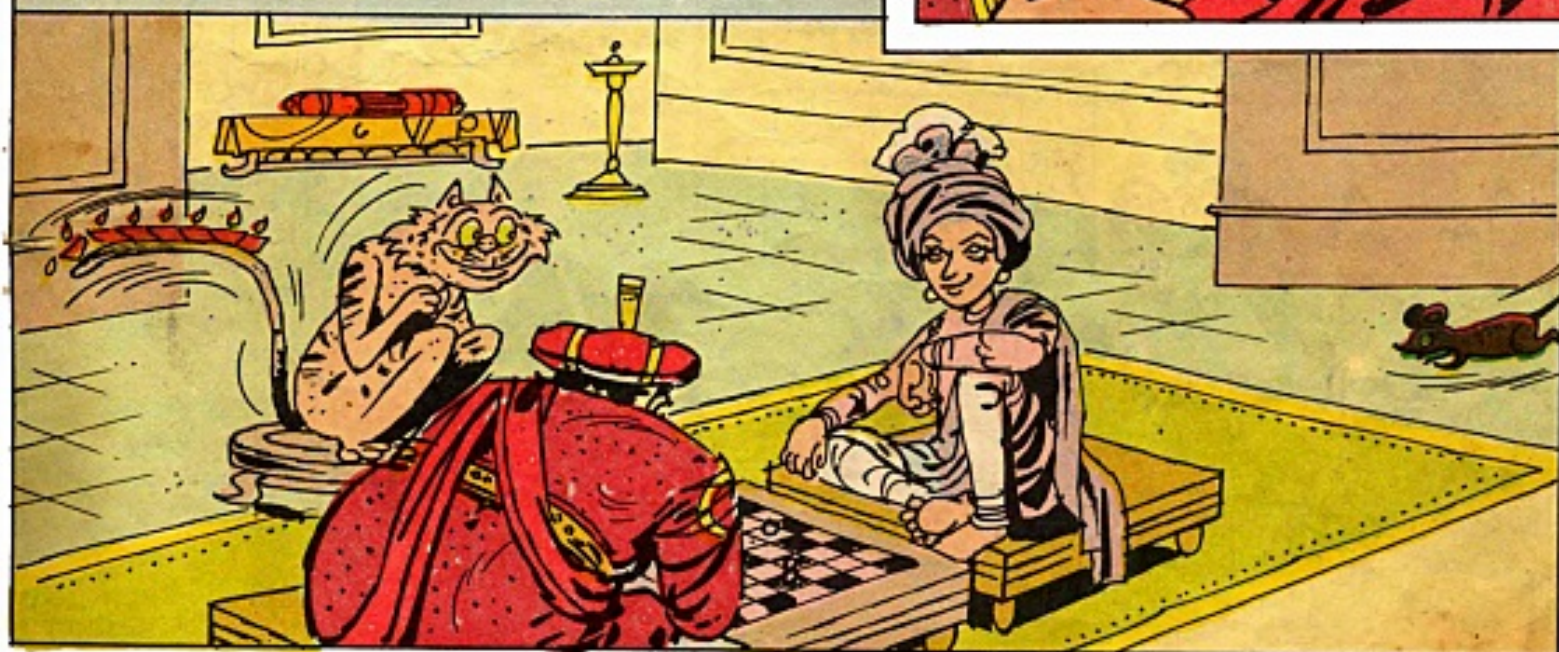
THE KING IS  
DESPERATE. NOW  
I MUST BE ALERT.  
THANK GOD MY  
HUSBAND  
TAUGHT ME  
ALL THE TRICKY  
MOVES!



AS THE KING TRIED FRANTICALLY  
TO FINISH THE GAME ...



... THE SERVANT LET OUT A THIRD MOUSE.





THIS TIME THE CAT COULD NOT RESTRAIN HERSELF. SHE JUMPED FORWARD, UPSETTING ALL THE LAMPS.



I HAVE WON. THE CAT HAS MOVED AND THE GAME HAS NOT ENDED.



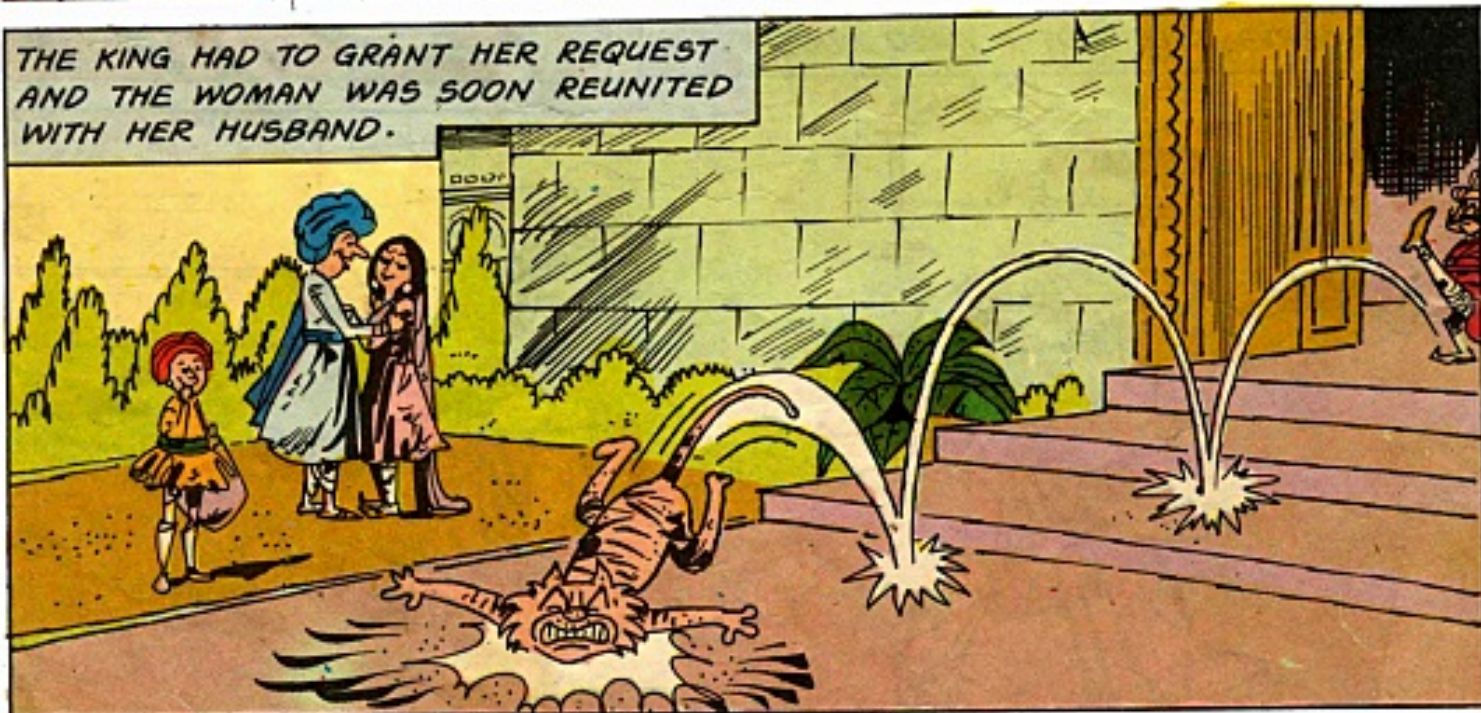
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?



I WANT YOU TO RELEASE ALL THE MEN YOU HAVE ENSLAVED.

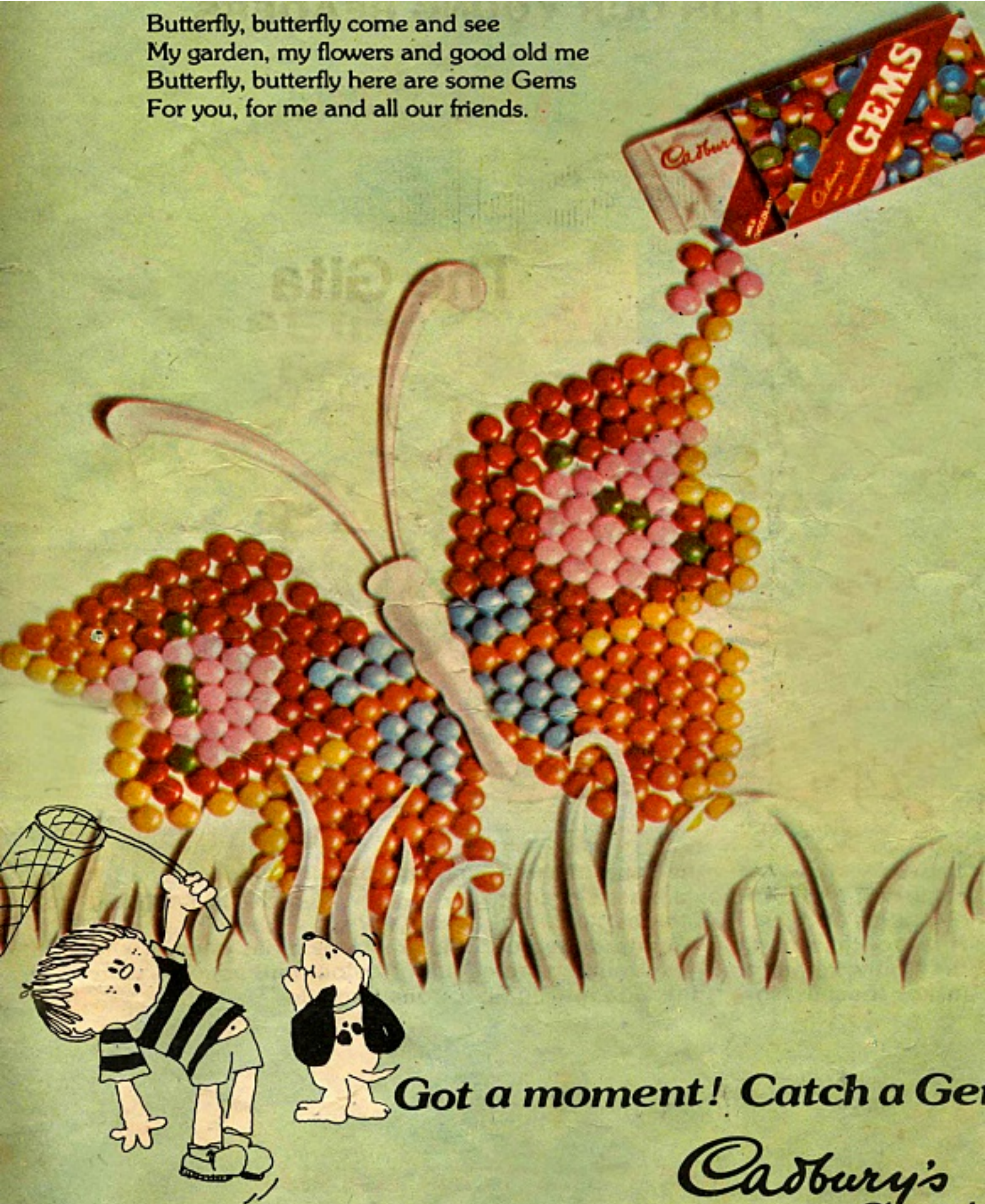


THE KING HAD TO GRANT HER REQUEST AND THE WOMAN WAS SOON REUNITED WITH HER HUSBAND.





Butterfly, butterfly come and see  
My garden, my flowers and good old me  
Butterfly, butterfly here are some Gems  
For you, for me and all our friends.



**Got a moment! Catch a Gem**

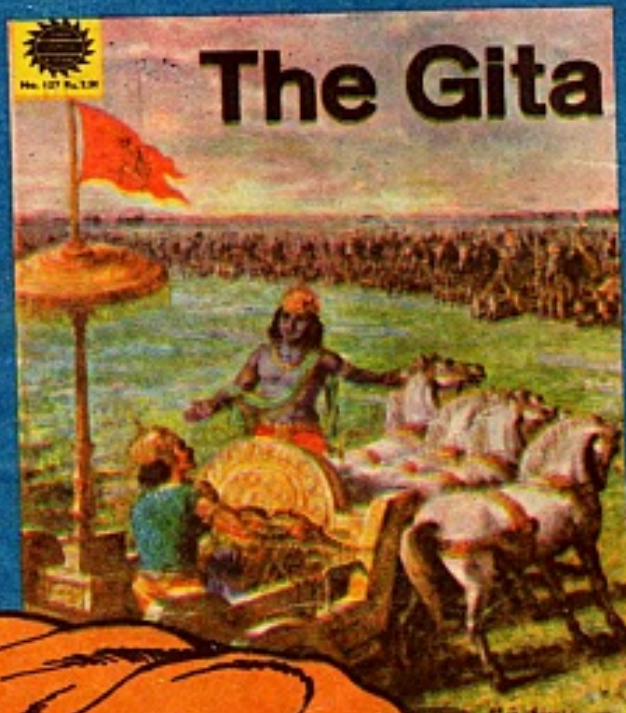
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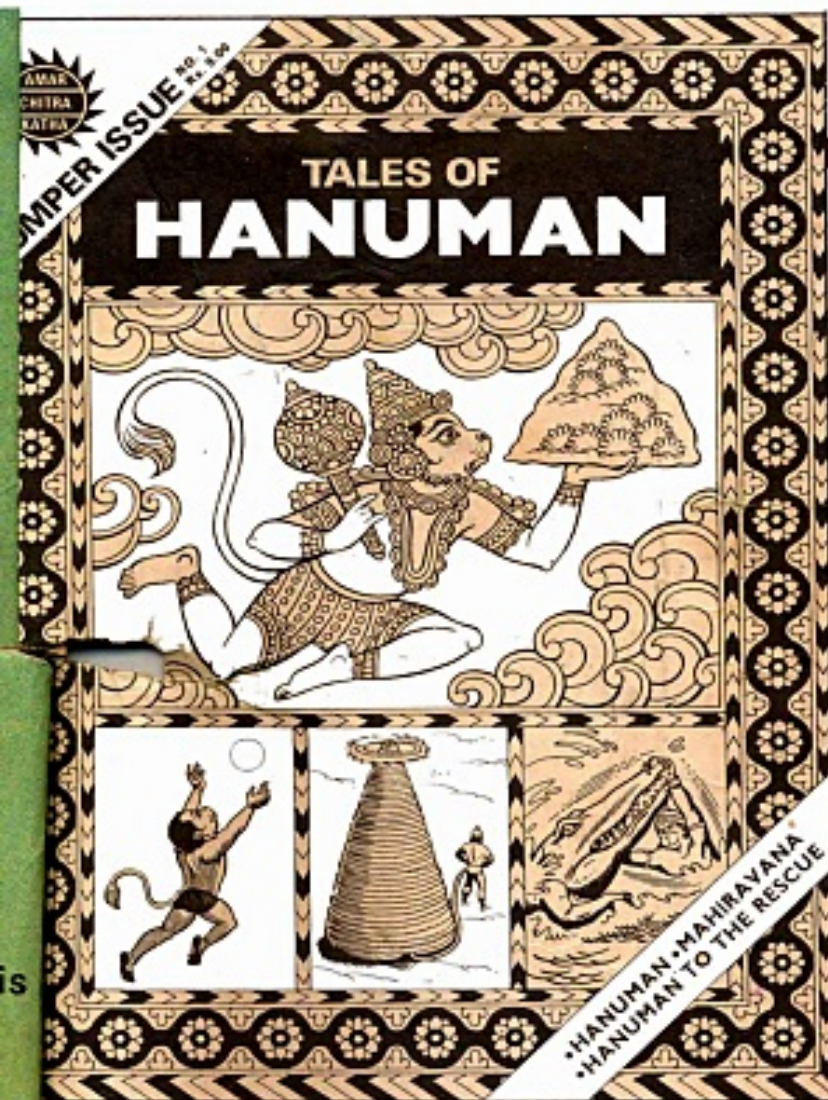
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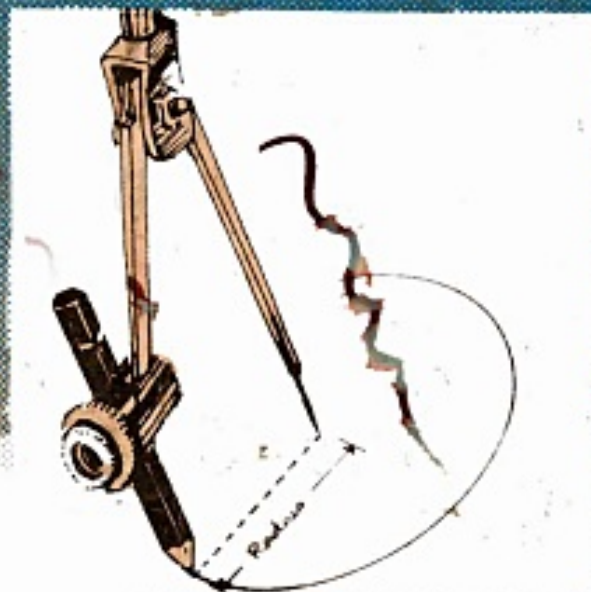
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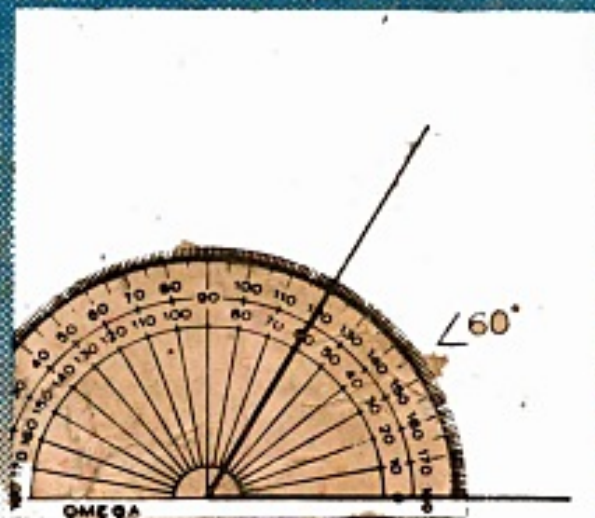
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